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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7062

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 000202

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/WHA, DS/ITA/WHA, WHA/CEN, OBO/OPS/SHEM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ABLD](#) [ASEC](#) [GT](#) [KCRM](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY GUATEMALA VEHICLE HIT BY GUNFIRE

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On March 4, 2009, at approximately 0915 hours, an official Embassy vehicle was hit by one round of gunfire in the rear window assembly while traveling within six blocks of the Embassy. No Embassy personnel were injured. END SUMMARY

12. (SBU) On March 4, 2009, at 0912 hours, the Embassy Surveillance Detection team reported a National Civilian Police (PNC) unit with weapons drawn was in pursuit of another vehicle in close proximity to the Embassy. At 0915 hours, Embassy security dispatch received a report that an official Embassy vehicle had been hit by gunfire while traveling in Zone 9, within six blocks of the Embassy and near the location of the aforementioned PNC pursuit. RSO staff immediately went to the scene to provide assistance; the sole occupant and driver, a US Contractor, was not injured.

13. (SBU) PNC officials confirmed that they were involved in a felony stop at this time and location and that their target vehicle was driven by suspected kidnappers. PNC Director Marlene Blanco subsequently called the RSO to express regret over the incident.

14. (SBU) RSO conducted a preliminary investigation, and based on the initial PNC report, eye-witness accounts, and the teleconference with PNC Director Blanco, RSO believes that the gunshot that hit the Embassy vehicle was an errant round from the PNC during their pursuit of the kidnappers, and not intentionally directed at Embassy personnel.

15. (U) RSO will continue to monitor and assist the PNC investigation as needed. This incident is yet another example of the escalating violence that is being observed throughout Guatemala and in close proximity to the Embassy.
McFarland